

Message Text

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56

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 CU-02 SCCT-01

USSS-00 SY-05 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00 AGR-05 FEA-01 /118 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7729

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 3581

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, DR, SP, VE

SUBJECT: DOMINICAN POLITICAL ASSESSMENT: SECOND QUARTER 1976

1. SUMMARY: QUARTER'S DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDED VISITS BY SECRETARY KISSINGER, THE KING AND QUEEN OF SPAIN, AND VENEZUELAN EX-PRESIDENT RAFAEL CALDERA; A RECRUDESCENCE OF STUDENT ACTIVISM MET BY A NEW FIRMNESS ON THE PART OF UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES; AND SKIRMISHING BETWEEN SECURITY FORCES AND LEFTIST TERRORISTS. HOWEVER, THE DOMINANT CONCERN WAS ELECTRICITY SUPPLY. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S DISMAL PERFORMANCE IN ANTICIPATING GROWING DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY BY INSTALLING NEW GENERATING CAPACITY IS NOW BEING ATTRIBUTED TO THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF. ELECTRICITY SHORTAGE IS SLOWING DOWN ECONOMY, ADDING TO THE CREDIBILITY OF THE PRESIDENT'S CRITICS AND ERODING SOME OF HIS POLITICAL SUPPORT. END SUMMARY.

2. THREE VISITS

A. SECRETARY KISSINGER'S VISIT ON JUNE 6, ALTHOUGH ONLY OF 5 HOURS

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DURATION, SERVED WELL TO DEMONSTRATE U.S. INTEREST IN THE CARIBBEAN

AND IN A SMALL, FREINDLY COUNTRY. AS A MARK OF RESPECT FOR THE DR AND OF ESTEEM FOR PRESIDENT BALAGUER, IT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ALREADY EXCELLENT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

B. THE VISIT OF THE KING AND QUEEN OF SPAIN FOR TWO DAYS IN MAY WAS OF HISTORICAL INTEREST AS THE FIRST VISIT OF A SPANISH MONARCH TO THE NEW WORLD WHICH SPANISH EXPLORERS OPENED TO COLONIZATION. IT SERVED AT THE SAME TIME AS AN OCCASION FOR PRESIDENT BALAGUER TO REAFFIRM HIS COUNTRY'S IDENTIFICATION WITH "HISPANIDAD."

C. RAFAEL CALDERA, FORMER PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA AND A LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY, COPEI, SPENT A HIGHLY PUBLICIZED WEEK IN THE DR IN JUNE. OSTENSIBLY HERE TO ATTEND A REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON LABOR LAW AND POLICY, CALDERA TALKED VOLUBLY, IN SPEECHES, PRESS CONFERENCES AND

RADIO AND TV INTERVIEWS, ABOUT VENEZUELAN, DOMINICAN AND WORLD AFFAIRS,

NOT HESITATING TO GIVE HIS VIEWS ON INTERNAL DOMINICAN MATTERS. ONE EXPLANATION FOR PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S FRIEDLY HOSPITALITY DESPITE SOMEWHAT GRATUITOUS PRONOUNCEMENTS ON INTERNAL DOMINICAN AFFAIRS, IS THAT BALAGUER WAS SENDING A MESSAGE TO VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT PEREZ, WHOSE ACCION DEMOCRATICA MAINTAINS CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO DOMINICANO, THAT TWO CAN PLAY AT THE GAME OF CULTIVATING THE OTHER'S OPPOSITION PARTIES.

3. CAMPUS UNREST

ACTIVISTS OF TWO COMMUNIST GROUPINGS ON THE UASD CAMPUS INVADED THE RECTOR'S OFFICE EARLY LAST MONTH IN PROTEST AGAINST DISCIPLINARY DISMISSALS OF SEVERAL STUDENTS. IN A SURPRISING DISPLAY OF FIRMNESS--FOR THE UNIVERSITY--THE RULING BODY SEVERELY CRITICIZED THE STUDENT ACTIVISTS, DISMISSED THEIR LEADERS, AND ASSERTED THE NEED FOR MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE AMONG ALL CAMPUS GROUPS. OTHER STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS, MOST OF THEM MARXIST, SUPPORTED THE DECISIONS OF THE UASD ADMINISTRATION. AT NO TIME WERE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES INVOLVED.

4. POLICE/TERRORIST SKIRMISHES

ON MAY 10 LEFTIST TERRORISTS SHOT TWO DOMINICAN SOLDIERS IN AN AREA OF THE CAPITAL DARKENED BY AN APAGON (ELECTRICITY OUTAGE), KILLING ONE OF THEM. THIS WAS FIRST SUCH INCIDENT IN THE CAPITAL IN ALMOST CONFIDENTIAL

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A YEAR. IN THE ARRESTS THAT FOLLOWED, POLICE ANNOUNCED THAT THEY HAD UNCOVERED HALF A DOZEN TERRORIST PLOTS.

5. THE POLITICAL COSTS OF APAGONES

ELECTRICITY OUTAGES, PREVIOUSLY INFREQUENT, HAVE BECOME COMMON THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY THIS PAST YEAR, EVOKING IRRITATION AND ANGER, ORIGINALLY

AIMED AT THE COMPANIA DOMINICANA DE ELECTRICIDAD (CDE) AND ITS DIRECTOR, JULIO SAURI, BUT MORE RECENTLY AT PRESIDENT BALAGUER HIMSELF. THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, WHICH HAS SUFFERED SEVERE LOSSES, HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POOR PERFORMANCE, AND SOME OF THE MORE RADICAL POLITICAL GROUPINGS WHICH PURPORT TO REPRESENT VIEWS OF THE POORER SECTIONS OF SANTO DOMINGO HAVE TRIED TO EXPLOIT THE DISCONTENT OF THESE BARRIOS. PRESS AND RADIO HAVE ATTRIBUTED THE ELECTRICITY CRISIS TO INADEQUATE PLANNING AND HAVE GIVEN ITS CONSEQUENCES FULL COVERAGE. TOGETHER WITH LOWER SUGAR PRICES FOR THIS YEAR'S CROP, THE ELECTRICITY PROBLEM MAY PRODUCE THE POOREST GROWTH RATE IN A DECADE. THE MAJOR OPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN AMONG THE CRITICS, BUT NONE SEEMS TO BE EXPLOITING THE ISSUE SYSTEMATICALLY AND SUCCESSFULLY AT THIS TIME, POSSIBLY BECAUSE THEY MAY BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS AMPLE TIME AND MONEY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM BEFORE THE

1978 ELECTIONS. ELECTRICITY REMAINS, HOWEVER, A POLITICAL ISSUE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE.
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